# Autism Spectrum Disorder
# Parent Resource Directory

British Columbia
Ministry of Children and Family Development

**Developed by the Ministry of Children and Family Development
in partnership with the Ministries of Education,
Health Services and Health Planning, Province of British Columbia**

**The Autism Spectrum Disorder Parent Resource Directory is also available
on-line at: www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/special_needs.htm**

**National Library of Canada Cataloguing in Publication Data**
Main entry under title:
Autism spectrum disorder provincial resource directory. – [2000]-

Annual.
"Developed by the Ministry for Children and Families in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health, Province of British Columbia."
Imprint varies: 2001- , Ministry of Children and Family Development and Ministry of Health.
ISSN 1499-2159 = Autism spectrum disorder provincial resource directory

1. Autistic children – Services for – British Columbia – Directories. 2. Autism – Patients – Services for – British Columbia – Directories. I. British Columbia. Ministry for Children and Families. II. British Columbia. Ministry of Education. III. British Columbia. Ministry of Health and Ministry Responsible for Seniors. IV. British Columbia. Ministry of Children and Family Development. V. British Columbia. Ministry of Health.

HV3008.C3A97 362.1'968982'0025711 C00-960214-3

102-03803/

# Table of Contents


**INTRODUCTION**

What is Autism? 6
What Causes Autism? 8
Is There a Cure for Autism? 8
Coping Strategies 8
Key Contact Information 9

**EARLY YEARS**

Transition Checklist 11
Who Does What? 12
Getting Connected 13
Assessment and Diagnosis Services 14
Inter-disciplinary Team Diagnostic Centres for Children 14
Early Identification and Intervention 16
Behavior and Skills Support Services 19
Child and Family Support Services 22
Child Care Services 23

**OFF TO SCHOOL (TRANSITION TO SCHOOL)**

Transition Checklist 25
Who Does What? 26
Getting Connected 27
Ministry of Education Resources 27
Child Care Services 28

**LEAVING THE NEST (TRANSITION TO ADULT SERVICES)**

Transition Checklist 31
Who Does What? 32
Getting Connected 33
Health Services for Community Living 33

Mental Health Support Team 34
Clinical and Community Mental Health Support Services 35
Forensic Psychiatric Services Commission 35
Continuing Care 35
Medical and Health Care Benefits 36
Pharmacare 36
Leisure and Recreation 37
B.C. Government Services for Adults with Developmental Disabilities 38
Residential Services 38
Training and Support Services 40
Vocational Rehabilitation Services 41
Adult Special Education Programs 42
Disability Benefits 43

**PROVINCIAL SUPPORT AGENCIES**

Government Support Agencies 45
Non-government Support Agencies 47

**APPENDIX 1:**

Website Links 52

**APPENDIX 2:**

Child Development Checklist 54
Checklist for Autism in Toddlers (CHAT) 56

**APPENDIX 3:**

Recommended Reading 57

**This guide is not meant to be an endorsement of any specific intervention or service provider and should not be used as a substitute for professional advice. An appropriate professional can advise you and your family about autism.**

---

*"Whether you have long suspected that your child has disorder on the autism spectrum, or it has come as a complete surprise, a diagnosis of autism, Asperger's Syndrome or Pervasive Developmental Disorder can come as a tremendous shock. Parents react in many different ways, but most need information and time to understand what exactly this means for the future of their child and their family. It is the intention of this directory to get you started on the right track."*

– Karen Hovestad, Parent

---

# Purpose of the Directory

When a child is diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder, the emotional impact on parents and extended family can be profound. The diagnosis may prove to be challenging for the entire family and will require adjustment for all members. It may come as a shock, followed by a grieving period. Information and contact with other families can be helpful so parents may plan for their child's future. A high priority for parents is to learn as much as they can about Autism Spectrum Disorders and to share information with siblings and extended family.

The Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) has developed this directory, in collaboration with families, community agencies and other government ministries, to provide information on services and supports for children and youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder. The services and supports in this directory are delivered based on the needs of the child and their family and are subject to available resources.

The directory includes an early screening tool to determine the first signs of delayed development and also provides families with information on services for adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder. As well, checklists are included for key transition points to help families make smooth transitions to services. Information is also available through a doctor, psychiatrist or social worker to help parents determine what will best meet the needs of their child.

Parents should set high expectations for their child and ensure professionals know they wish to be considered an essential part of the child's team. Other parents can be crucial for support and can guide you towards finding services available in the community. Numerous books and videos are also available to help with the initial feelings of shock and disbelief, and to help assist with planning.

## WHAT IS AUTISM?

Autism is a life-long developmental disability that prevents people from understanding what they see, hear and sense. It is a neurological disorder affecting the functioning of the brain and is usually evident before the child turns three years old. Autism interferes with normal development of the brain, affecting reasoning, social interaction and communication. It is a spectrum disorder, which means there is a wide variation in how autism takes form. Autism includes children who are totally withdrawn and cannot talk. This is the 'classic' form of autism and is usually referred to as Autistic Disorder. The spectrum also includes those children who speak, but have great difficulties in holding a meaningful conversation.

The major points, which help distinguish the specific diagnoses used for Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)/Pervasive Developmental Disorders (PDD) are:

**Autistic Disorder** –impairments in social interaction, communication, and imaginative play prior to age 3 years. Stereotyped behaviours, interests and activities are exhibited.

**Asperger's Disorder** – is characterized by impairments in social interactions and the presence of restricted interests and activities, with no clinically significant general delay in language. Testing is in the range of average to above average intelligence.

**Pervasive Developmental Disorder – Not Otherwise Specified** – commonly referred to as atypical autism. A diagnosis of PDD-NOS may be made when a child does not meet the full criteria for a specific diagnosis of autism, but there is a severe and pervasive impairment in specified behaviours associated with autism.

**Rett's Disorder** – a progressive disorder which, to date, has occurred only in girls. Period of normal development and then loss of previously acquired skills, loss of purposeful use of the hands replaced with repetitive hand movements beginning at the age of 1-4 years. Incidence is much lower than many other ASDs.

**Childhood Disintegrative Disorder (CDD)** – CDD is a rare form of PDD. The child is normally developing at birth, but "disintegrates" during their first five years of life. The symptoms include significant loss of language, decreased use of nonverbal gestures (i.e. eye contact and pointing), and fewer social initiations and social responses.

The symptoms and characteristics of ASD can present themselves in a wide variety of combinations, from mild to severe. Although Autism Spectrum Disorders are defined by certain sets of behaviours, children and adults can exhibit *any combination* of the behaviours in *any degree of severity*. Two children, both with the same diagnosis, can act very differently and have varying skills. Therefore, there is no standard "type" or "typical" person with autism. Parents may hear different terms used to describe children within this spectrum, such as: autistic-like, autistic tendencies, autism spectrum, high-functioning or low-functioning autism, more-abled or less-abled. More important to understand is, whatever the diagnosis, children can learn and function productively and show gains from appropriate education and treatment.

Although many individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder have some degree of mental disability, many people with ASD do hold responsible jobs and live independently. Others have the intellectual abilities to do the same jobs but are held back by their inability to adapt socially to the stresses of everyday life. Children and adults with ASD are often challenged in non-verbal communication, social interactions and recreational activities.

The prevalence of Autism Spectrum Disorder is approximately 1 in 500, although recent research indicates the prevalence rate may be on the increase. ASD is four to five times more common in boys than girls and has no ethnic or social boundaries. Family income, lifestyle, and educational levels do not affect the occurrence. There is no medical test for autism; assessment and diagnosis ideally should involve an experienced inter-disciplinary team that includes a pediatrician or child psychiatrist, a psychologist, a speech-language pathologist, and possibly an occupational therapist.

For convenience and clarity, this document may use the term "autism" when referring to Autism Spectrum Disorders as is customary in professional literature.

## WHAT CAUSES AUTISM?

The causes of autism are still unknown. It is a biological condition that can be triggered by a number of factors, most of which are not yet completely understood. It is currently believed to have a genetic basis that affects the neurological development of the brain, though some theories connect autism with specific environmental factors or other triggers. It may be a complex interplay of genetic and environmental factors.

It is known that autism is **not** caused by the parents or the way a child is raised. The cause is physical and affects the development of parts of the brain. Some of the causes currently being explored are chromosome abnormalities, viruses and pollutants. The genetics of autism are now being intensively researched.

## IS THERE A CURE FOR AUTISM?

For now, there is no cure for autism. There are, however, highly effective treatment methods available that can help individuals and their families manage this disorder. Many children with autism can learn to communicate effectively, share in family life and attend school. While some children with autism may never lead a 'typical' life, almost all children with autism benefit to varying degrees from early intervention programs that incorporate the practices of applied behavioural analysis (ABA).

## COPING STRATEGIES

**Perspective:** Remember that you are not alone and that you are not the first family to cope with the realities of autism. The quicker you realize this and begin down the path to constructively coping with your child's diagnosis, the greater the gains will be for your child in terms of leading a 'typical' life.

**Work together as a family:** In times of stress, family members tend to take their frustrations out on each other when they most need mutual support. Despite the difficulties in finding child care, couples find that taking breaks without their children helps renew their bonds. The other children also need attention, and need to have a voice in expressing and solving problems.

**Keep a sense of humour:** Parents find that the ability to laugh and say, "you won't believe what our child has done now!" helps them maintain a healthy sense of perspective.

**Notice progress:** When it seems that all the help, love, and support is going nowhere, it's important to remember that over time, real progress is being made. Families are better able to maintain their hope if they celebrate the small signs of growth and change that they observe.

**Take action:** Many parents gain strength from working with others, especially other parents, on behalf of all children with autism. Working to win additional resources, community programs, or school services helps parents see themselves as important contributors to the well-being of others as well as their own child.

**Plan ahead:** Naturally, most parents want to know that when they die their offspring will be safe and cared for. Having a plan in place helps relieve some of the worry. Some parents form a contract with a professional guardian, who agrees to look after the interests of the person with autism, such as observing birthdays and arranging for care.

## KEY CONTACT INFORMATION

**The Autism Society of British Columbia (ASBC)**
The Autism Society of British Columbia (ASBC) was started in 1974. It is a parent-based and directed society providing support to people with autism and their families in British Columbia. Their mission is to promote understanding, acceptance, and full community inclusion for people with autism in British Columbia, while providing support for the realization of the rights and informed choices of individuals with autism and their families. Their services include:

- Workshops for parents and professionals
- Local community groups for parents
- Resource information and referral
- Bi–monthly newsletter
- Informational videos
- Advocacy services
- Summer funding grants
- Library and lending services
- Autism awareness information

For more information about a community's specific programs and services, and for links with other families, please contact the ASBC branch nearest you.

ASBC Provincial Office
301 – 3701 East Hastings
Burnaby, B.C. V5C 2H6
Telephone: (604) 434-0880
In B.C., toll free: 1-888-437-0880
Fax: (604) 434-0801
E-mail: info@autismbc.ca
Website: www.autismbc.ca

ASBC Northern Branch Office
208 – 154 Quebec Street
Prince George, B.C. V2N 5X9
Telephone: (250) 561-0881
Fax: (250) 561-0887
E-mail: autismbc_pg@uniserve.com

ASBC Vancouver Island Branch Office
212 – 285 Prideaux Street
Nanaimo, B.C. V9R 2N2
Telephone: (250) 714-0801
Fax: (250) 714-0802
E-mail: nanaimo@autismbc.ca

**Ministry of Children and Family Development**
Website: www.gov.bc.ca/mcf/

Enquiry B.C. provides toll-free access to provincial government offices in B.C., and can also direct callers to the appropriate office.
In Vancouver phone: (604) 660-2421
In Victoria phone: (250) 387-6121
In B.C., call toll-free: 1-800-663-7867

# Early Years

*"Be advised that this is the start of your journey, one you must wholeheartedly embrace for the benefit of your child and the healing of your family."*

– Karen Hovestad, Parent

## Transition Checklist

What can you do as a parent if you are concerned about your child's development?

1. Use the 'Child Development Checklist', provided in Appendix 2 of this directory and follow up with the family physician.
2. Request the family doctor to make a referral to a psychiatrist, psychologist or a pediatrician with experience in diagnosing autism/autism spectrum disorder.
3. Have your child's hearing tested.
4. Contact your local Infant Development Program.
5. See a speech-language pathologist.
6. Begin interventions while waiting for a specific diagnosis.
7. Contact the Autism Society of B.C. for more information.

If your child has been diagnosed with any of the Autism Spectrum Disorders, you can use the steps outlined below as a guide to access programs and services.

1. Call the local Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) office and ask to be referred to a social worker in a Community Living Services office. Community Living Services offices are responsible for voluntary services for children and youth with developmental disabilities. The social worker can assist in determining and accessing government-funded services appropriate for your child.

2. Review services available for children with autism and discuss options with a ministry social worker in a Community Living Services office.
3. Access Supported Child Care through your local MCFD Community Living Services office. This provides support and consultation services to facilitate the inclusion of a child with autism in a community setting, such as child care or preschool.
4. Contact other families through the Autism Society of B.C. and build a support network to share experiences and creates links within the community.

## Who Does What?

Since autism is a relatively rare disorder, many of the professionals listed below may have little or no knowledge or experience with autism. Parents are advised to try to seek out professionals with experience in treating persons with autism. ASBC has a number of professionals with an interest in ASD.

**Family Doctors/ Pediatricians** can advise parents about accessing and referral for diagnostic and post-diagnostic services for autism, make referrals to specialists, and help families find autism supports.

**Public Health Nurses** provide information on healthy growth and development of children, immunization and resources, supports and services in their community.

**Social Workers** inform and refer parents to services provided by the Ministry of Children and Family Development and link families with community-based supports and services.

**Speech-Language Pathologists** provide speech and language assessment and intervention services to preschool children who have, or are at risk for developmental disabilities in the area of communication.

**Supported Child Care Consultants** facilitate the inclusion of children with special needs in the broader child care system.

**Psychologists** offer diagnosis and can address concerns about a child's learning abilities or behaviour. Assessments may be used to identify a child's strengths and abilities, assist in planning goals and strategies to address identified needs. Psychologists are available to provide family-centred treatment and support.

**Psychiatrists** may provide diagnostic assessment and re-assessment of children, monitor prescriptions and/or medical treatments and family counseling.

**Occupational therapists** observe how a child participates in daily routines like dressing, playing or feeding, and how he/she reacts to sounds and sights. Suggestions can be made for methods of handling a child with autism and adaptations for infant/toddler equipment to make bathing and feeding easier.

**Public Health Audiologists** provide hearing screening, assessments and intervention supports for children with or at risk for hearing loss.

**Consultants** design, develop and monitor individualized intervention plans.

**Behavioural Interventionists** implement an individualized intervention plan on a one-to-one basis.

## Getting Connected

**Autism Society of British Columbia (ASBC)**
Refer to page 10 for the branch of the Autism Society of B.C. near you to connect with other families and support services in your community or e-mail info@autismbc.ca. ASBC Website: www.autismbc.ca.

**Family Support Institute (FSI)**
This institute will provide information, referrals, training, province-wide parental networking and information about the local community.

For more information about province-wide services, phone (604) 875-1119 in Vancouver, or e-mail fsi@bcacl.org Website: www.familysupportbc.com

## Assessment and Diagnosis Services

The best practices approach for assessment and diagnosis involves an inter-disciplinary team knowledgeable in Autism Spectrum Disorders. The team carries out a comprehensive developmental and health history and assessment of cognition and communication for the child. An inter-disciplinary approach uses input from a physician (for instance, a developmental pediatrician or a pediatric psychiatrist) and allied professionals as appropriate (for instance psychologist, speech-language pathologist, occupational therapist, physical therapist, etc.). A single, integrated report is prepared.

The Ministries of Health Services and Health Planning are currently enhancing assessment and diagnosis services for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder in the province. The long term goal is to build regional capacity to provide quality services, based on best practices, to all families in B.C.

As of the summer of 2001, inter-disciplinary team diagnosis is available through a family physician's referral to one of the following centres:

## Inter-disciplinary Team Diagnostic Centres for Children

Request a referral to one of the following from your family doctor or pediatrician.

**Provincial Centres:**

**Sunny Hill Health Centre for Children**
Child Development Rehabilitation Program
3644 Slocan Street
Vancouver, B.C. V5M 3E8
Telephone: (604) 453-8300
Fax: (604) 453-8301
Website: www.cw.bc.ca

**B.C. Children's Hospital**
Infant Psychiatric Department (for children up to age 6)
(these are psychiatrist-only assessments, not inter-disciplinary teams*)
or Department of Psychiatry (children age 7 and up)
4480 Oak Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6H 3V4
Telephone: (604) 875-2345
Fax: (604) 875-2099
Website: www.cw.bc.ca
Intake Worker, B.C. Children's Hospital's Infant Psychiatric Department:
(604) 875-2010
Department of Psychiatry, B.C. Children's Hospital: (604) 875-2099

*if child is identified as having an Autism Spectrum Disorder, department will determine further necessary investigation and cross-refer to inter-disciplinary team at Sunny Hill or in the community.

**Regional Centres:**

**Queen Alexandra Centre for Children's Health**
Coordinated Intake Services
2400 Arbutus Road
Victoria, B.C. V8N 1V7
Telephone: (250) 477-1826
Fax: (250) 721-6837
Website: www.caphealth.org
Families can self-refer for an assessment.

**Central Okanagan Child Development Centre**
1546 Bernard Avenue
Kelowna, B.C. V1Y 6R9
Telephone: (250) 763-5100
Fax: (250) 862-8433
Families can self-refer for an assessment.

In future you may check the latest Family Bulletin on MCFD's Website www.gov.bc.ca/mcf/ for updated information on inter-disciplinary team diagnostic services closer to your home.

## Early Identification and Intervention

It is well known that the early years of a child's life constitute a unique opportunity for influencing child development and supporting families, an opportunity that may well maximize long-term benefits for all concerned. Children change from almost complete dependence to relative independence in a few short years. They acquire extensive language and communication, fine motor skills and social skills. They absorb an extensive amount of knowledge and reasoning in a brief time. For most children this learning occurs without formal instruction.

Children with autism have difficulty learning new skills without specific instruction. Sometimes they do not benefit from the typical experiences and guidance provided by parents. Even the techniques provided in preschool settings for typical children are insufficient to reach and teach the child with autism. There is no validated or empirically documented "cure" for autism; however, the research is clear, autism can be effectively managed, and positive outcomes can be attained, using a combination of behavioural, educational and biological intervention programs. Research has shown early intervention can be key in improving social, language and academic skills. It can lead to more opportunities for people with autism to build positive relationships and experience meaningful participation at home, school and in the community.

**Early Intensive Behavioural Intervention (EIBI)**

EIBI is a specialized, interdisciplinary, intensive treatment and intervention program, based on best practices, for children under the age of six diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder and their families. It involves providing one-to-one therapy and support services as soon as possible after a child is diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder - ideally between two and four years of age.

The Ministry of Children and Family Development will be providing two options for Early Intensive Intervention services: contracted EIBI programs and individualized funding to families. Currently, three contracted agencies provide EIBI programs in the following areas: Surrey, Delta, Langley, Greater Victoria, Kamloops, Kelowna, Penticton and Vernon. At the time of publication of this directory, the implementation plan for the individualized funding is being developed and this option is expected to be available in June 2002. For current information on early intervention services, see the MCFD website at www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/special_needs.htm

Your child may be eligible for the EIBI program if he or she is (a) under six years old and (b) has received an inter-disciplinary assessment and diagnosis that has identified him or her as having one of a group of related disorders called Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). These disorders are comprised of Autism, Pervasive Developmental Disorder-Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS) and Asperger's Syndrome. Contact your local MCFD Community Living Services office for further information.

## Behaviour and Skills Support Services

### DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

Below is a list of services that support children with special needs by promoting healthy development and increasing their ability to participate in the community.

These services are available through the Ministry of Children and Family Development and can be accessed through a social worker at your local Community Living Services office:

**Infant Development Program** serves children, up to the age of three, who are at-risk for developmental problems or who have a developmental delay and/or disability. Professionally trained infant development consultants visit families at home and help parents to encourage and support their child's development. Consultants assist in developing individualized activity programs, appropriate toys and resource materials as well as linking families with other families and community services.

**Early Intervention Services** provide a range of physio and occupational, speech and language, family support, public education, assessment and intervention services.

**Behavioural Support for Children with Autism** provides behavioural consultation to children with autism and their families, such as child-specific training, demonstrations of behavioural techniques and development of behavioural management plans.

**Supported Child Care** provides extra support, consultation and training to child care providers so all children are able to participate in a typical child care setting.

These services are available through regional Health Authorities:

**Public Health Speech and Language Services** provide a range of public education, assessment and intervention services to preschool children with or at-risk for, difficulties in the area of communication. As well, adults with communication impairments and resulting disabilities are served in some health authorities.

**Public Health Audiology Services** identify, assess and provide intervention services for children and youth who have been diagnosed as, or who are at risk of, having hearing loss.

## PROVINCIAL AGENCIES PROVIDING BEHAVIOUR CONSULTING SERVICES

**CBI Consultants (Communication, Behavior, and Instruction)**
CBI Consultants' behavioural consultation and training services are based on a "best practices framework" for supporting children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. CBI follows a child and family centred approach to develop a functional assessment and individualized positive behavioural support strategies. CBI's training and behavioural consultation services emphasize a team approach to planning, assessing, developing, implementing, and evaluating individualized support strategies for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder.
Lower Mainland: (604) 469-2727
Website: www.cbiconsultants.com
Email: cbiconsultants@shaw.ca

**Gateway Behavioral Support Services**
Gateway Society, based in Ladner, is a specialized, non-profit service agency, providing a full range of services to children, youth and adults with autism and pervasive developmental disorders and their families living in British Columbia. All of Gateway's services are community-based and include a range of residential options (one-person, two-person and four-person homes), supported employment and day programs for adults, behavioural support services to children in the Lower Mainland, Kootenays and the North, a library and training for family members. Gateway's Treatment Centre is a residential facility, funded as a provincial resource, for adolescents with severe autism who need specialized residential care for up to 18 months.
Lower Mainland: (604) 272-3353
Kootenays: (250) 352-6026
Northern B.C.: (250) 561-1194

**Mainstream Association for Proactive Community Living**
**The Laurel Division**
The Laurel Division is located on the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island and provides comprehensive professional behavioural management services. Programs serve children, adolescents and adults with behavioural challenges and specializing in autism and Autism Spectrum Disorder.
Lower Mainland: (604) 298-3434
Victoria: (250) 920-0912
Email: office@thelaurelgroup.com

**Vancouver Island Community Support Services**
Vancouver Island Community Support Services provides behavioural support to children with autism and their families, to enable the individual to meet their fullest potential. These services include behavioural assessments, training, information and service co-ordination. Vancouver Island Community Support Services works collaboratively with the school, day program and community team to assist the family in meeting the unique needs of the individual.
221 – 2270 Cliff Avenue
Courtenay, B.C. V9N 2L4
Telephone: (250) 337-1993
Cell Phone: (250) 897-6722

## Child and Family Support Services

The Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) provides various family-centred support services for children and youth with special needs, including autism, and their families, to ensure they receive the assistance they require to live and participate successfully in the community. These services are accessed through your Ministry of Children and Family Development social worker. Service availability may vary from region to region.

**At-Home Program** provides supports and services for families who are caring for their severely disabled children at home. This program has two components: Respite Benefits and Medical Benefits.

**Respite Services (a component of Special Needs Family Support)** provides intermittent rest/relief for families with children who have special needs.

**Nursing Support Services** will provide assessment, information and/or direct and delegated nursing support to children who have complex health care needs, in their home, school, or childcare setting.

**Child and Youth Care Workers for Families with Children with Special Needs** will provide children and families with a specialized child care worker, who assists the child to learn social, life skills and/or the family to learn parenting/child management skills.

**Homemaker/Home Support Worker Services** provide care and supervision for children, in the family home, while parents are temporarily absent.

**Parent Support for Families with Children with Special Needs** provides a range of community based services, including parent support groups, parent skills training, counseling life skills and organized activities.

**Professional Support for Children with Special Needs** provides professional involvement to assist families, service providers and ministry staff to assess the child and develop intervention plans. This may involve training, counseling, public awareness and agency liaison.

## Child Care Services

### MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT (MCFD)

**Supported Child Care** is a family support program that works in partnership with other government and community services to include children with special needs in the broader child care system. It is provided to children with one or more documented impairments, who require support to participate in a community childcare setting. The principles of Supported Child Care are inclusion, family-centred care, community-based service, individual planning and shared responsibility. Support and consultation services are provided to assist with placement of a child in a community setting. Ask your MCFD Community Living Services social worker, your local Supported Child Care agency, or call the local Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) program for more information.

**Child Development Centres (CDCs)** may offer children and youth with Autism Spectrum Disorders very specific programs, such as Supported Child Care and Infant Development Programs, physical and occupational therapies, and speech-language pathology. To contact your local CDC, phone the local MCFD office listed in the phone book in the Blue Pages, or under Child Development Centres, Cerebral Palsy Associations, Neurological Associations and/or Abilities Centres.

## MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY, ABORIGINAL AND WOMEN'S SERVICES (MCAWS)

**Child Care Resource and Referral Program** increases the availability and quality of child care services by recruiting, training and supporting child care providers. It also assists parents in finding child care through referrals and consultation. There are 40 child care resource and referral programs serving the province.

**Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre** operates province-wide and provides early childhood multicultural services, child care INFORM, financial management support for non-profit child care centres, and a resource library. These programs support the child care infrastructure by offering key resources to child care providers, enabling them to offer care that is high quality, inclusive, culturally-sensitive and bias-free.

More information on MCAWS programs is available through:
Child Care Programs Branch
Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services
PO Box 9965 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, B.C. V8W 9R4
Telephone: (250) 356-6001
Fax: (250) 953-3327
West Coast Child Care INFORM toll free line: 1-800-565-3445

More information on child care services is available at:
www.sdes.gov.bc.ca/programs/childcar.htm
Check under Contact List for Child Care Resource and Referral program offices.

## MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCES (MHR)

**Child Care Subsidy Program** assists low and moderate-income families with child care costs. Parents may direct the subsidy to the child care arrangement of their choice. Contact your local MHR office for more information.

# Off to School (Transition to School)

*"Remember to laugh and never give up hope!"*

– Cheryl Thorpe, Family Advocate for the Capital Health Region

## Transition Checklist

Before your child starts school –

1. Contact the school well in advance of the time your child will enter. Arrange to meet with school staff who will be involved in your child's education program. Provide the school staff with information about your child and show your willingness to be involved in planning your child's education program.
2. Offer to be a link between the professionals who have been working with your child in the preschool years and the elementary school staff.
3. Find out the various programs and supports which are available to meet the special needs of students in the school and school district. Ask the principal and/or school district staff about options available for your child. The Provincial Outreach Program for Autism and Related Disorders can assist school staff to learn skills to best meet your child's needs.
4. As the school staff plan your child's program, participate in the development of the Individual Education Plan (IEP) for him/her. Parents have the right to be consulted on both placements and IEPs, however, schools are responsible for these decisions. Maintain strong collaborative relationships with the school and/or school district staff carrying out this work. An IEP is a plan specifically designed to meet the individual education needs of a child with special needs.

It describes:

- the student's strength and needs
- individualized goals and strategies to reach those goals
- modifications to the regular program that will be made for a student if required, and
- adaptations to instructions, environment, or support and special services to instruction for the child.

IEPs often include information about which staff is responsible for different actions and the plans for transition to the next level of schooling or the community.

## Who Does What?

**School Staff: Principals, teachers, counselors and teachers' assistants**
Depending on the needs of your child, there could be several school staff who plan together and support him/her. This group is often called the *School Based Team.* Ideally one person, sometimes called a *case manager,* will be chosen to coordinate this work and will be the best person for you to talk with about your child's needs. Most students with autism are placed in regular classes with additional support and accommodations. However, some students receive their education program in a smaller, specialized class or a community-based setting.

**Speech-Language Pathologists**
The services of a Speech and Language Pathologist (Therapist) may be provided to assess the communication needs of your child and assist the school-based staff in setting up a language development program.

**Social Workers**
The Ministry of Children and Family Development social worker links families with community-based services and supports.

**School Psychologists** may provide some direct assessment of cognitive functioning, behaviour, social skills and academic achievement. They may be helpful in assisting school personnel in writing appropriate goals and objectives and in developing appropriate behavioural intervention programs.

**Ministry of Education**
The Ministry of Education provides supplemental special education funding to school boards and independent schools to assist them in providing programs for students with special needs. They also fund two provincial resource programs, which assist schools to provide services to students with autism: the Provincial Outreach Program for Autism and Related Disorders (POPARD) and SET-BC (see next page for description). School boards or schools must request these services so parents should discuss with school staff.

## Getting Connected

**Autism Society of British Columbia (ASBC)**
Refer to page 10 for the branch of the Autism Society of B.C. near you to get connected with other families and support services in your community while your child is in the school system. ASBC Website: www.autismbc.ca

**Family Support Institute (FSI)** can provide information, referrals, training, province-wide parent networking and referrals to resources in local communities. For more information about province-wide services, contact (604) 875-1119 in Vancouver, or e-mail fsi@bcacl.org Website: www.familysupportbc.com

## Ministry of Education Resources

***Teaching Students with Autism: A Resource Guide for Schools*** (RB 0102) was published by the Ministry of Education Special Programs Branch in 2000. Copies are available on loan from the Autism Society of B.C. Library or ordered from Office Products by telephone at 1-800-282-7955. This document, and other Ministry of Education publications on education and special needs, are also available on the Ministry of Education Website at www.gov.bc.ca/bced

**Provincial Outreach Program for Autism and Related Disorders** provides consultative advice and support to schools in your community. One of the services provided to schools is training for teaching staff, including teachers' assistants. To find out whether these services are available to help staff in your child's school, parents should discuss the involvement of the Provincial Outreach Program with school or district staff.

**SET-BC (Special Education Technology)** provides schools with computer technology resources for some students with special needs. Training is also available to teachers and aides. Students with autism may get access to these services based on school or school district priorities. To find out whether these services are available to help staff in your child's school, parents should discuss the possibility with school staff.

## Child Care Services

### MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT (MCFD)

**Supported Child Care** is a family support program that works in partnership with other government and community services to include children with special needs in the broader child care system. It is provided to children with one or more documented impairments, who require support to participate in a community childcare setting. The principles of Supported Child Care are inclusion, family-centred care, community-based service, individual planning and shared responsibility. Support and consultation services are provided to assist with placement of a child in a community setting. Ask your MCFD Community Living Services social worker, your local Supported Child Care agency, or call the local Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) program for more information.

**Child Development Centres (CDCs)** may offer children and youth with Autism Spectrum Disorders with very specific programs, such as Supported Child Care and Infant Development Programs, physio and occupational therapies and speech and language pathology. To contact the local CDC, phone the local MCFD office, listed in the phone book in the Blue Pages, or under Child Development Centres, Cerebral Palsy Associations, Neurological Associations and/or Abilities Centres.

## MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY, ABORIGINAL AND WOMEN'S SERVICES (MCAWS)

**Child Care Resource and Referral Program** increases the availability and quality of child care services by recruiting, training and supporting child care providers. It also assists parents in finding child care through referrals and consultation. There are 40 child care resource and referral programs serving the province.

**Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre** operates province-wide and provides early childhood multicultural services, child care INFORM, financial management support for non-profit child care centres, and a resource library. These programs support the child care infrastructure by offering key resources to child care providers, enabling them to offer care that is high quality, inclusive, culturally-sensitive and bias-free.

More information on MCAWS programs is available through:
Child Care Programs Branch
Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services
PO Box 9965 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, B.C. V8W 9R4
Telephone: (250) 356-6001
Fax: (250) 953-3327
Or at www.sdes.gov.bc.ca/programs/childcar.htm
Check under Contact List for Child Care Resource and Referral program offices.

## MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCES (MHR)

**Child Care Subsidy Program** assists low and moderate-income families with child care costs. Parents may direct the subsidy to the child care arrangement of their choice. Contact your local MHR office for more information.

# Leaving the Nest (Transition to Adult Services)

*"Focus on the positives and celebrate successes."*

– Cheryl Thorpe, Family Advocate for the Capital Health Region

## Transition Checklist

1. Begin planning for the child's transition to adulthood by the age of 16. Wherever possible, involve the child in planning. Transition to Adult Services may mean accessing services provided by different ministries such as the Ministry of Health Services, the Ministry of Human Resources, the Ministry of Advanced Education, and the Ministry of Children and Family Development. There will also be a variety of eligibility criteria across the ministries depending on the services accessed.
2. Parents should develop a transition plan team that includes people they want for support for their family and their child. Consider friends of the child, family friends, family members, teachers and other school professionals, and the social worker.
3. Develop a transition action plan that addresses potential adult needs and the skills the child needs to learn during the high school years. It should address the team concerns in the areas of academic skills, vocational skills, social skills, employment options, living skills and financial needs.
4. Work with the school-based team in developing an Individual Education Plan (IEP) to include the skills identified in the transition plan.
5. Assist the child in building a network of friends and social supports, including involvement in school and community activities.
6. Assist the child in developing and following through on their personal interests in community recreation and future work/adult learning programs.

7. Annually review the transition plan and the IEP to assess progress and make necessary revisions.
8. By Grade 10, the youth should begin exploring day options that may be available once she or he finishes school (i.e. community college, adult day programs, supported work options, volunteering, recreation).
9. Contact the youth's social worker to discuss eligibility for adult learning and/or living supports that may be available from government or community agencies.
10. Discuss with the social worker the application process for disability benefits with the Ministry of Human Resources.
11. By Grade 12, career and work goals should be determined for when they leave school.
12. Contact should be made with the social worker to finalize arrangements for any adult government and/or community agency learning and/or living support available to them.

## Who Does What?

**Financial Assistance Workers (FAW)** with the Ministry of Human Resources can provide assistance in completing applications for financial assistance, such as an "Application for Disability Benefits" form.

**Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) Consultants** with the Ministry of Human Resources can assist with assessment, career planning, training and other vocational rehabilitation services.

**Social Workers** with the Ministry of Children and Family Development link families with community-based services and supports.

**Mental Health Support Team** will provide individualized responses to psychiatric, psychological, or behavioural issues referred persons may have. The team provides assessment, consultation, direct clinical work including group therapy, follow-up and education. Referrals may be from a social worker or health professional.

## Getting Connected

**B.C. Association for Community Living (BCACL)**
Provides advocacy, service referrals, workshops and provincial review panels. For more information, phone (604) 875-1119 in Vancouver; fax (604) 875-6744. Website: www.bcacl.org

**Association for Community Living (ACL)**
Provides vocational training, respite, preschool and infant development programs. For more information, phone (604) 875-1119 in Vancouver.

**Autism Society of British Columbia (ASBC)**
Refer to page 10 for the branch of the Autism Society of B.C. near you to connect with other families and support services in your community to assist in the transition to adulthood. Website: www.autismbc.ca

## Health Supports

### HEALTH SERVICES FOR COMMUNITY LIVING (HSCL)

This program provides specialized nursing and rehabilitation services to adults with developmental disability, age 19 years or older, living in the community, who are eligible for services from the Community Living Services Branch of the Ministry of Children and Family Development. Living situations can vary from supported family care to group homes.

There are four associated programs to address specific health needs:

- **The Nutrition Program** provides medical nutrition therapy, including assessment and consultation for persons at high nutritional risk. For example swallowing difficulties, tube feeding and weight loss.
- **The Dysphagia Program** provides specialized therapy consultation for persons with swallowing difficulties.
- **The Dental Program** increases the capacity of clients, families and caregivers to provide effective daily oral hygiene care and ensures clients' dental treatment needs are identified, referred and provided for.

- **The Specialized Seating and Mobility Program** provides specialized therapy consultation regarding wheelchair seating and positioning.

To find the services available in your community, contact the HSCL health unit in your region. The number can be found by looking in the Blue Pages of the local telephone book under Health Authorities, located after the Government of B.C. listings.

## MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT TEAM

There are five regional teams, which operate under the provincial program Mental Health Services for People with Mental Handicaps. Services are provided on an individualized basis. The support teams provide psychiatric assessment and treatment for individuals with developmental disabilities. Referrals to the program are through local Ministry of Children and Family Development Community Living Services offices. Individuals being referred to the program:

- are 14 years or older
- meet the diagnostic criteria for mental handicap, and
- have a mental illness, a serious behavioural problem or a psychiatric condition.

The team gives priority to urgent situations, and will respond as quickly as possible in order to stabilize an individual in crisis or prevent individuals from going into crisis. Education and training form part of the team's mandate to provide an effective range of support services to individuals, families and caregivers.

To access services, contact your local Ministry of Children and Family Development Community Living Services office.

## CLINICAL AND COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICES

**The following Adult Mental Health services are intended for individuals with an IQ over 70 and who have a diagnosable mental illness. For more information about the services, look in the Blue Pages of your local telephone book under the Health Authorities' listings.**

Individuals are assessed and assigned a priority for service. Service may include prescribing and/or monitoring medication, counseling, referral to support groups within the community, residential care, supported housing or to other healthcare resources for medical problems. Services vary across Health Authorities, and are offered by physicians, psychiatric and community health nurses, psychologists and mental health workers. Services are provided to individuals with mental illnesses, who are in conflict with the criminal justice system.

## FORENSIC PSYCHIATRIC SERVICES COMMISSION

Services are provided to individuals with mental illnesses, who are in conflict with criminal justice system, through the Forensic Psychiatric Institute and Adult Community Forensic Clinics. Referrals are received from the criminal justice system.

## CONTINUING CARE

Service involves support to live at home (for instance, personal care, meal preparation, respite service) and residential care (intermediate, multi-level or extended care). Individuals who are referred for service are:

- enrolled with Medical Services Plan
- have had residency status in B.C. for:
  - 3 months for extended care
  - 12 months for intermediate care
- are age 19 or older, and
- have had a chronic physical illness of minimum 3 months duration.

To access the program, look in the Blue Pages of your local phone book under Health Authorities, Community Health Services or Health Units.

## MEDICAL AND HEALTH CARE BENEFITS

The Medical Services Plan is the province's medical insurance program and pays for medically required services of general practitioners and specialists. For information on benefits, eligibility and enrollment:

- check the Medical Services Plan's Website at http://www.healthservices.gov.bc.ca/msp/
- visit a Government Agent/B.C. Access Centre (see the Blue Pages of the local telephone directory) or the Medical Services Plan's Victoria office at 1515 Blanshard Street or the Burnaby office at #002-4603 Kingsway.
- telephone the Medical Services Plan in Victoria at (250) 386-7171 or, if you are having difficulty getting through, toll free at 1-800-663-7100.

## PHARMACARE

Residents automatically qualify for Pharmacare coverage by registering with the Medical Services Plan. Pharmacare benefits are provided by eight different plans that target:

- Plan A – Seniors aged 65 and over
- Plan B – Permanent residents of licensed long-term care facilities
- Plan C – Individuals eligible for benefits through the Ministry for Human Resources
- Plan D – Individuals registered with a provincial Cystic Fibrosis Clinic
- Plan E – All other residents of the province under the age of 65 registered under the Medical Services Plan of B.C.
- Plan F – Children eligible for medical or full benefits through the At Home Program of the Ministry for Children and Family Development
- Plan G – Clients eligible for benefits through mental health centres
- Home Oxygen; Palliative Care; Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS

For specific details about Pharmacare:

- ask your pharmacist for an information pamphlet
- check the Ministry of Health Services Website at www.healthservices.gov.bc.ca/pharme/
- telephone Pharmacare:

| | |
|---|---|
| Greater Victoria | (250) 952-2866 |
| Lower Mainland | (604) 682-6849 |
| Elsewhere in B.C. | 1-800-554-0250 |

## Leisure and Recreation

Many municipalities throughout the province offer programs that facilitate inclusive recreation and leisure opportunities for children, youth and adults with disabilities. Services may include leisure planning, leisure assistance (one-to-one volunteer assistance), training and education of recreation facility and parks staff, referrals and assistance in overcoming barriers to participation. Volunteers are given free passes to attend the recreation facility when accompanied by a person with a disability. To locate resources in the community, check the Blue Pages of the local telephone book.

### LEISURE AND RECREATION RESOURCES

**Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability**
www.ala.ca/

**Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance**
www.cahperd.ca

**Canadian Intermural Recreation Association**
www.intramurals.ca

**Canadian Parks and Recreation Association**
www.cpra.ca

**Canadian Special Olympics**
www.cso.on.ca

**Sailing Web**
www.footeprint.com/sailingweb/default.htm#Competitions

**Coalition for Active Living in Canada**
http://activeliving.ca/

**Recreation Integration Victoria**
www.islandnet.com/~riv/homepage.html

**Sport Information Resource Centre**
www.sirc.ca

**Pacific Riding for the Disabled Association**
Phone: (604) 530-8717
www.prda.ca

## B.C. Government Services for Adults with Developmental Disabilities

The Ministry of Children and Family Development's (MCFD) Community Living Services for Adults provides services to adults with developmental disabilities to enhance opportunities to live in the community. For details contact a MCFD office near you. Other provincial government ministries such as Ministry of Human Resources (MHR) and Ministry of Advanced Education (MAE) also provides services. The Ministry of Children and Family Development services include the following:

## Residential Services

A variety of residential options are available so individuals and their families can select the one that best suits their needs. Residential options include the following:

**Community Residences** vary from small family homes to larger residential facilities. All residences provide care and support for adults with developmental disabilities.

**Semi-independent Living** assists adults with developmental disabilities to live either alone or in small groups in homes or apartments. People live as independently as possible with the help of in-home support as required. Services are tailored to the needs of the individual.

**Respite and Relief Services** provides emergency or short-term care for adults living in community residences. Respite care provides for temporary care out of the home, while relief services provide for alternative in-home care. These services allow service providers and families periodic relief from their responsibilities.

**Intensive Adult Care** provides short-term community-based care for adults with challenging behaviour or unique needs that cannot be served by existing respite or temporary care facilities.

**Social housing** provided by B.C. Housing or non-profit organizations can be suitable for eligible adults with autism that are able to live independently and meet income requirements. Individuals with autism receiving B.C. Disability Benefits may also be eligible for social housing.

To contact B.C. Housing phone:

| | |
|---|---|
| In Victoria: | (250) 475-7550 |
| In Vancouver: | (604) 433-1711 |
| Housing Enquiries: | (604) 433-2218 |

Elsewhere in B.C., call toll free: 1-800-257-7756

---

*"Things can always be better – it is that hope that drives us. But if we're creative, we are sometimes surprised by what we can accomplish with what we already have."*

– Donna Seedorf-Harmuth, Capital Health Region,
Queen Alexandra Centre for Children's Health

---

## Training and Support Services

The Ministry of Children and Family Development provides funding for societies, agencies or private individuals to operate programs that offer training and support for adults with development disabilities, to assist them to become as independent as possible. Training and support programs provide opportunities for people to achieve their personal goals and participate in community life. The following programs offer a range of supports for people in their own communities. For more specific information, please contact your local MCFD office.

**Self Help Skills**
This program provides training to help people develop their personal and social skills necessary to function well in the community and become more independent in their daily lives. Services can include training in personal care, use of public transportation, community access, use of money and socialization and employment readiness skills.

**Home Support Programs**
These programs assist adults with developmental disabilities to maintain independent or semi-independent living arrangements through direct homemaking or household management, or training in these skill sets.

**Supported Work**
This program provides a combination of work experience, training and support to help individuals find and maintain work experience placements and employment.

**Professional Support**
These services provide assessment, support, consultation and planning to individuals, or those who support them, to ensure continued success in community placements. They also help service providers, ministry staff and families to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate programs and services related to community living, including training for caregivers.

## Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS)

Vocational Rehabilitation Services are delivered by VRS Consultants in the Ministry of Human Resources (MHR) offices throughout the province. For services look in the Blue Pages of the local telephone directory for the closest ministry office.

The assistance includes:

- assessment and career planning
- interventions required to prevent job loss
- technical and vocational training
- restorative goods, such as hearing aids
- on-the-job training assistance, and
- workplace and vehicle modifications.

To be eligible for VRS, you must:

- be a British Columbia resident
- be age 16 or older
- have a permanent disability that prevents or hinders you from participating in training and in the labour market, and
- be assessed as having a realistic potential to benefit from VRS.

---

*"Often the resources are right under your nose – a community needs a catalyst to get things started."*

– Donna Seedorf-Harmuth, Capital Health Region,
Queen Alexandra Centre for Children's Health

---

## Adult Special Education (ASE) Programs and Special Needs Services at Post Secondary Institutions

### ADULT SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Adult Special Education (ASE) programs are offered at public post-secondary institutions across British Columbia. ASE programs and courses provide students with an opportunity to acquire skills and knowledge to lead to increased independence and the ability to participate fully in society. ASE programs provide flexible learning opportunities for adult learners to acquire the skills they need to be successful in academic or employment-related programs or to move directly into the workplace.

### SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Targeted grant funding is provided to colleges and institutions in British Columbia to support students with disabilities. The purpose of this funding is to support successful participation for people with disabilities, to assist the institutions in providing services and supports for students with disabilities and to provide equal access to training across the province.

For information about the ASE programs and support services available in the province, visit the Ministry of Advanced Education (AVED) Website at www.gov.bc.ca/aved

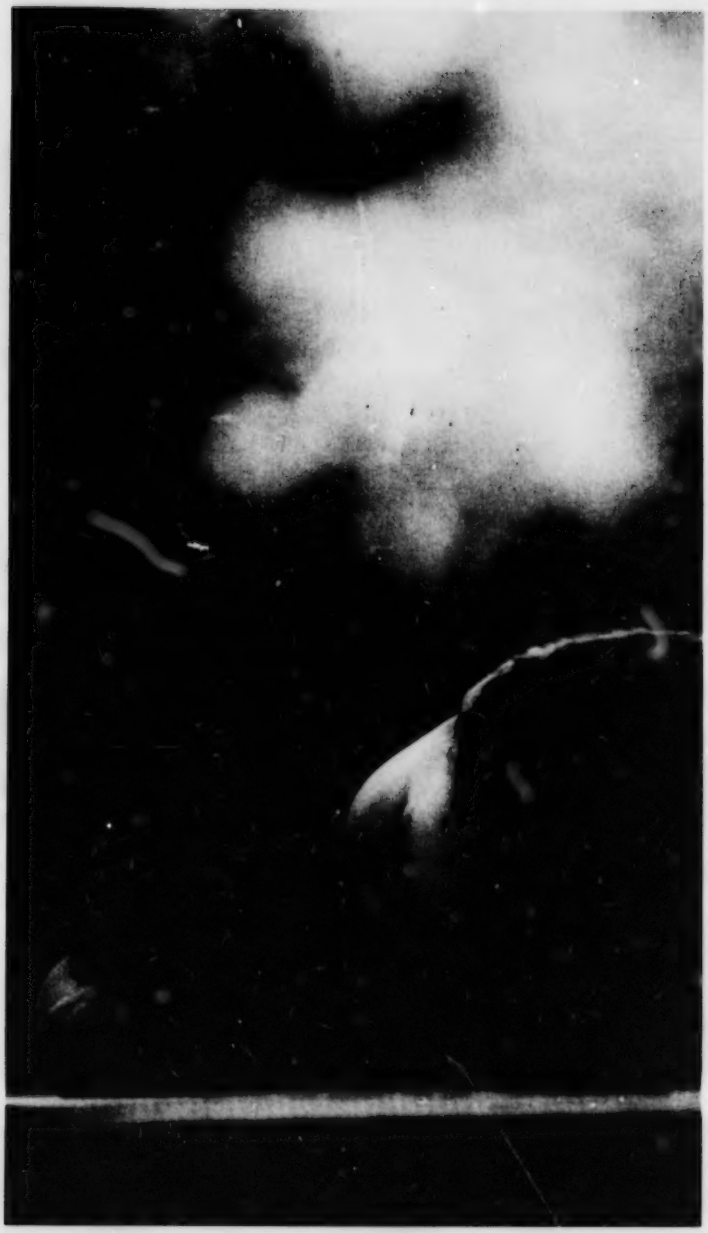
For specific information about available ASE programs see the B.C. Opportunities Website at http://bcopportunities.com or the website for Opening Doors at http://openingdoorsbc.com

## Disability Benefits

The Ministry of Human Resources provides income-tested financial support and other benefits to help people with disabilities take part more fully in community life and in some cases, in the job market.

To apply, complete an "Application for Disability Benefits" form. A financial assistance worker (FAW) or community worker can help you complete the form.

Applications are available through Ministry of Human Resources district offices (addresses are available in the local telephone directory blue pages). You may also obtain applications from public health units and some advocacy offices. If you have general questions about the program, call the toll-free Ministry of Human Resources' Health Services Branch info line at 1-800-337-3531.



# Provincial Support Agencies

*"I wish someone would have given me this resource three years ago when my daughter was diagnosed."*

– Donna Knoster, Parent

## Government Support Agencies

**The Children's Commission**
Reviews and monitors government services for children and youth under 19 in B.C., and advises government on improving these services.
For more information, phone toll free 1-800-859-1441; in Victoria, (250) 356-0831.
Website: www.childservices.gov.bc.ca

**Office of the Child, Youth & Family Advocate**
Protection of the rights of children, youth and families. For more information, phone toll free 1-800-476-3933; in Vancouver, (604) 775-3203.
Website: www.advokids.org

It was announced February 7, 2002 that key functions of the Children's Commission and the Child, Youth & Family Advocate are to be consolidated into a new position called the Children's Officer. Framework legislation for the new Children's Officer will be introduced in the spring 2002 session of Cabinet. Until this legislation is proclaimed, the Children's Commissioner and the Advocate will continue to function under existing legislation.

**Office of the Advocate for Service Quality**
Assists adults with developmental disabilities and their families in obtaining high quality services from the Ministry of Children and Family Development, from other ministries or from service agencies in the community. For more information, phone (604) 775-1238 in Vancouver; in Victoria call Enquiry B.C. at (250) 387-6121; and in the rest of B.C., call Enquiry B.C. at 1-800-663-7867.
Website: www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/getting_help/advocate_service_quality.htm

**The Public Guardian and Trustee of British Columbia**
Protects legal rights and financial interests of children and youth under 19 and vulnerable adults, and administers estates where no one else is able to do so. For more information, phone (604) 660-4444 in Vancouver; in Victoria call Enquiry B.C. at (250) 387-6121; and in the rest of B.C., call Enquiry B.C. at 1-800-663-7867.
Website: www.trustee.bc.ca

**Ombudsman**
Receives inquiries and complaints about the practices and services provided by public bodies, and can investigate complaints and make recommendations for change. For more information, phone toll free 1-800-567-3247, or (250) 387-5855 in Victoria.
Website: www.ombudsman.bc.ca

**Minister of State for Mental Health**
Role is to, within the current budget allocation and in coordination with the Ministry of Health Planning, ensure early action on mental health services; become the advocate for mental health services throughout government; and establish a public information program on mental health issues and community services in cooperation with other government agencies, professional bodies and community groups.

The Office of the Mental Health Advocate was closed in October 2001. Clients and service providers can continue to access program information or provide feedback on programs and services directly through the Ministry of Health Mental Health Branch at (250) 952-1269 in Victoria, or toll free through Enquiry B.C. at 1-800-663-7867.

**Minister's Advisory Council on Mental Health, Ministry of Health**
The Minister's Advisory Council on Mental Health consists of mental health consumers, family members and service providers from across British Columbia and represents a diverse cross-section of people who care about mental health reform. The Council provides advice to the Minister of State for Mental Health to facilitate effective mental health reform and service delivery for the benefit of all British Columbians.
Website: http://www.healthservices.gov.bc.ca/mhd/advisory/index.html

## Non-government Support Agencies

**The Autism Society of British Columbia (ASBC)**

ASBC is a non-profit organization serving B.C. families with a child or adult with autism. ASBC services include information, family support, advocacy and training. Included below is a list of programs and services. The mission is to promote understanding, acceptance, and full community inclusion for people with autism in British Columbia, while providing support for the realization of the rights and informed choices of individuals with autism and their families. ASBC provides links to parent support groups all over the province.

ASBC Provincial Office
The Autism Society of B.C.
301 – 3701 East Hastings
Burnaby, B.C. V5C 2H6
Telephone: (604) 434-0880
In B.C. toll free: 1-888-437-0880
Fax: (604) 434-0801
E-mail: info@autismbc.ca
Website: www.autismbc.ca

Northern Branch Office
208 – 154 Quebec Street
Prince George, B.C. V2N 5X9
Telephone: (250) 561-0881
Fax: (250) 561-0887
E-mail: autismbc_pg@uniserve.com

Vancouver Island Branch Office
212 – 285 Prideaux Street
Nanaimo, B.C. V9R 2N2
Telephone: (250) 714-0801
Fax: (250) 714-0802
In B.C. toll free: 1-888-437-0880
E-mail: nanaimo@autismbc.ca

**ASBC Programs and Services:**

- Province-wide Autism Support Network
- Parent Support Groups
- Referral
- Advocacy
- Liaison with Professionals, Resources and Government Agencies
- Parent Training Workshops
- Community Education and Awareness
- Autism Resource Library – free mailings throughout B.C.
- Lower Mainland Volunteer Buddy Program
- Summer Funding Program for members

**ANCA Consulting Inc.**

ANCA Consulting Inc. is a company created by autistic individuals for autistic individuals. Their focus is to support the natural development of the autistic individual within the framework of a non-autistic society. ANCA offers a range of services for the professional, the community at large, parents and autistic children, teens and adults.

Telephone: (604) 879-2522
Fax: (604) 879-2476
E-mail: ANCA@naturallyautistic.com
Website: www.naturallyautistic.com

**ANCA Foundation**

ANCA Foundation is a national non-profit organization dedicated to supporting the autistic community. Run by autistic adults, the focus is to educate, inform and create an awareness of autism from the "inside". ANCA Foundation provides a range of social development opportunities for its members and the community.

Telephone: (604) 879-1136
Fax: (604) 879-2476
E-mail: ANCA@naturallyautistic.com

**B.C. Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists (BCASLPA)**
The purpose of BCASLPA is to represent the interest of the professions of Speech/Language Pathology and Audiology and to promote the highest quality of service for the communicatively impaired in British Columbia. The BCASLPA is committed to providing the public with information about the professions and advocating for services for the communicatively impaired. The association provides information about registered clinicians working in public service and in private practice (with information on those private practitioners who have experience with children/adults with autism).

9912 Lougheed Hwy
Burnaby, B.C. V3J 1N3
Phone: (604) 420-2222
Fax: (604) 420-4896
Toll Free: 877-222-7572
Email: executivedirector_BCASPA@telus.net
Website: www.bcaslpa.bc.ca

**Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Disorders (CHADD)**
CHADD is a non-profit parent run organization that aims to help support, educate, and ultimately better the lives of individuals with ADD and those who care for them. Chapters throughout Canada and B.C.
For more information and for local chapters, see the CHADD Canada Website at: www.chaddcanada.org or email: info@chaddcanada.org
Phone: (604) 271-9285 or (604) 271-8338
Fax: (604) 272-6651

**Families for Early Autism Treatment (F.E.A.T.) of B.C.**
F.E.A.T. is a non-profit organization, which holds workshops, gives advice on therapies and trains therapists.
For more information, phone (604) 534-6956
E-mail: skfreeman@aol.com
Website: www.featbc.org

**Family Support Institute (FSI)**
This institute will provide information, referrals, training, province-wide parental networking and information about the local community.
For more information on province-wide services, phone in Vancouver (604) 875-1119, or e-mail: fsi@bcacl.org Website: www.familysupportbc.com

**Giant Steps West Therapeutic Centre for Children – Kamloops**
Giant Steps West offers intensive, one-to-one sessions in speech and occupational therapy, music, pre-academic and academic programs, self-care skill training and community experiences.
For more information, phone (250) 374-6400, fax (250) 374-2232.
E-mail: giantstepswest@telus.net
Website: ww3.bc.sympatico.ca/gsw/

**Giant Steps Greater Vancouver**
Giant Steps Greater Vancouver offers intensive, one-to-one sessions in speech and occupational therapy, music, pre-academic and academic programs, self-care skill training and community experiences.
For more information, call (604) 529-1920, fax (604) 529-1921.

**Glen Eden School**
A non-profit, private, grades 1–12 school serving Vancouver students with special needs. For more information, phone (604) 267-0394, fax (604) 267-0544.
E-mail: gleneden@mdi.ca

**Learning Disabilities Association of British Columbia (LDABC)**
Information, referral and support, with branches province-wide.
For more information, phone (250) 370-9513, fax (250) 370-9421.
E-mail: contact@1dasvi.bc.ca
Website: www.1dasvi.bc.ca

**Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network (PLAN)**
Advocacy such as, legal information on wills, trusts, financial and estate planning.
For more information, phone (604) 439-9566, fax (604) 439-7001.
E-mail: inquiries@plan.ca
Website: www.plan.ca

**Parents of Children with Autism (POCA)**
Victoria-based parent support group for families of children with autism sponsored by the Victoria Society for Children with Autism and the Victoria Association for Community Living. Contact: Bev Kissinger at the Victoria Association for Community Living (VACL) at 477-7231.

**Teachers' Tutoring Service (TTS)**
Tutoring at reasonable prices available to special needs children.
For more information, phone (604) 730-3410, fax (604) 730-3416.
E-mail: tutor@dowco.com
Website: www.tutor.bc.ca

**Vancouver Island Society of Autistic Homes**
This society provides three group homes for adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Victoria, as well as providing support and advocacy.
Contact Executive Director, Darryl Gorrie at 475-2566.

**Victoria Society for Children with Autism (VSCA)**
Local agency for the ASBC, with an extensive resource and lending library.
Meetings are held on the fourth Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the Pearkes Building, Queen Alexandra Centre for Children's Health.
For more information, contact Michael Yarr, President at 385-3862.
Email: vsca@home.com
Website: www.members.home.net/vsca/i

## Appendix 1: Website Links

**AUTISM SOCIETY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA: www.autismbc.ca**

Promotes understanding, acceptance and full community inclusion for people with autism in British Columbia, while providing support for the realization of the rights and informed choices of individuals with autism and their families. Website contains links to other autism-related sites.

**VANCOUVER COMMUNITY NET: www.vcn.bc.ca**

The Vancouver Community Network owns and operates a free, publicly accessible, non-commercial computer utility in the Lower Mainland, which provides a public space on the Internet. This site provides a search tool for local events and organizations. You can find anything from art and culture, family information and policy, to information on various organizations.

**INFORMATION SERVICES VANCOUVER: www.vcn.bc.ca/isv**

Information Services Vancouver (ISV) is British Columbia's largest provider of information and referral services. They are a link to thousands of community, social and government agencies across the province.

**MINISTRY OF ADVANCED EDUCATION:**
**www.aved.gov.bc.ca/adultspecialed/resource**

The Ministry of Advanced Education Website offers a resource directory of programs and services for students with disabilities in public post-secondary institutions.

**MINISTRY OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT:**
**www.gov.bc.ca/mcf**

The Ministry of Children and Family Development's Website provides a list of programs and services provided for children with special needs, including autism. It also lists ministry publications, including this directory, and others relevant to children, youth and adults with special needs.

**MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY, ABORIGINAL AND WOMEN'S SERVICES: www.gov.bc.ca/mcaws**

The Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services Website provides information about child care programs. Parents wanting information about choosing quality child care and child care referrals can access a list of Child Care Resource and Referral agencies serving local communities across the province.

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION: www.gov.bc.ca/bced**

The Ministry of Education Website provides information about children with special needs in the school system.

**MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCES: www.gov.bc.ca/mhr**

The Ministry of Human Resources provides a list of services offered by the ministry, including the child care subsidy program and income benefits services.

**THE OFFICE FOR DISABILITY ISSUES: www.gov.bc.ca/odi**

The Office for Disability Issues connects persons with disabilities to government and is government's single most comprehensive resource on disability issues. The Office provides policy and planning; it does not provide programs or individual client-services. The Website offers links to the community, government representatives, publications, B.C. Resources and an inventory of government-related services.

**MINISTRY OF HEALTH SERVICES: www.gov.bc.ca/healthservices**

**MINISTRY OF HEALTH PLANNING: www.gov.bc.ca/healthplanning**

**B.C. HEALTH GUIDE: www.bchealthguide.org**

On-line B.C. Health Guide Handbook and related information.

## Appendix 2: Child Development Checklist

### CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Reprinted from 'Head to Toe' Winter, 1997, B.C. Medical Association

Autism and related conditions are not always simple to diagnose. If you question your child's development and want more guidance, see an appropriate professional for advice.

The following checklist may help you determine whether you should consult a professional regarding your two- to three-year-old child's development. Put a Y for "Yes" or an N for "No" in the box beside each question.

**Developmental Checklist**

☐ Does your child enjoy playing word/action games with others (such as peek-a-boo)?

☐ Does your child show emotions that fit the situation?

☐ Do your child's fears seem unusual?

☐ Is your child interested in what's going on around him or her?

☐ Does your child enjoy playing with many different toys, in many ways?

☐ Is your child beginning to enjoy pretend play, taking turns, and imitating other people's play?

☐ Is your child interested in approaching other children and joining in a group?

☐ Can your child easily indicate his or her interests and needs through words or sounds?

☐ Is your child talking as you would expect?

☐ Does your child point to, ask for, or try to show you something?

- ☐ Does your child look at you when you talk to him or her?
- ☐ Does your child imitate other people's words or sounds?
- ☐ Does your child imitate gestures and facial expressions?
- ☐ Is your child comfortable with changes in routine?
- ☐ Does your child hear and react to sound as you would expect?
- ☐ Does your child enjoy being touched and touching other things?
- ☐ Does your child move his or her hands like other children?
- ☐ Does your child see and react to things as you would expect?
- ☐ Does your child eat and drink a variety of foods and beverages?

Try these with your child:

- ☐ Point to a toy and say, "Look, there's a _____." Does your child look in the right direction?
- ☐ Use two cups and spoons. Invite your child to pretend to make juice with you – mix, pour, and drink. Does your child participate?
- ☐ Ask your child to show you something in the room. "Show me the _____." Where's the _____?" Does your child turn and point or touch the items?

*If you answered "No" to some of these questions, or if you need more information, talk with your family doctor, pediatrician, community health nurse, local health unit, or child care provider.*

When families begin to use services at the first signs of delayed development, the child has a better chance for positive results.

## CHAT

### THE CHECKLIST FOR AUTISM IN TODDLERS – A SCREENING TOOL

To be used by GP's or Health Visitors during the 18-month development check-up.

### SECTION A: ASK PARENT

- ☐ 1. Does your child enjoy being swung, bounced on your knee, etc?
- ☐ 2. Does your child take an interest in other children?
- ☐ 3. Does your child like climbing on things, such as up stairs?
- ☐ 4. Does your child enjoy playing peek-a-boo/hide-and-seek?
- ☐ 5. *Does your child ever pretend, for example, to make a cup of tea using a toy cup and teapot, or pretend other things (pouring juice)?
- ☐ 6. Does your child ever use his/her index finger to point, to ask for something?
- ☐ 7. *Does your child ever use his/her index finger to point, to indicate interest in something?
- ☐ 8. Can your child play properly with small toys (e.g. cars or blocks) without just mouthing, fiddling, or dropping them?
- ☐ 9. Does your child ever bring objects over to you (parent), to show you something?

### SECTION B: GP OR HV OBSERVATION

- ☐ i. During the appointment, has the child made eye contact with you?
- ☐ ii. *Get child's attention, then point across the room at an interesting object and say, "Oh look! There's a (name of toy)." Watch the child's face. Does the child look across to see what you are pointing at?[1]
- ☐ iii. *Get child's attention, then give child a miniature toy cup and teapot and say, "Can you make a cup of tea?" Does the child pretend to pour out tea, drink it, etc?[2]
- ☐ iv. *Say to the child, "Where's the light?" or "Show me the light."[3] Does the child point with his/her index finger at the light?
- ☐ v. Can the child build a tower of blocks? (If so, how many?) (Number of blocks…)

* **Indicates critical questions that are most indicative of autistic characteristics.**

[1] (To record yes on this item, ensure the child has not simply looked at your hand, but has actually looked at the object you are pointing at).

[2] (If you can elicit an example of pretending in some other game, score a yes on this item).

[3] (Repeat this with, "Where's the Teddy?" or some other unreachable object; if the child does not understand the word "light". To record a yes on this item, the child must have looked up at your face around the time of the pointing).

**AUTISM IS TREATABLE** – Early diagnosis and intervention is vital to the future development of the child. This is a prescreening tool – WHEN IN DOUBT, REFER.

## Appendix 3: Autism Society of B.C.'s Recommended Reading for Parents of Children Diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder

The following list of resources has been provided by the Autism Society of British Columbia. These and many other books are available by calling the Autism Society of B.C. at 1-888-437-0880. Requests are mailed out anywhere in B.C. free of charge to members. These books provide a good starting point for gaining insight, practical information and support. These books and further information on autism can be found at libraries, bookstores, as well as through the Autism Society of British Columbia.

1. Attwood, Tony, *Asperger's syndrome, a guide for parents and professionals*, Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1998.
2. *Behavioral intervention for young children with autism: a manual for parents and professionals*, edited by Catherine Maurice, Gina Green, Stephen C. Luce, Pro-Ed Publishers, 1996.
3. Chassman, Marilyn, *One-on-one: working with low-functioning children with autism and other developmental disabilities*, IEP Resources, 1999.
4. Faherty, Catherine, *What does it mean to me: a workbook explaining self-awareness and life lessons to the child or youth with high functioning autism or Asperger syndrome*, Future Horizons, 2000.
5. Gerlach, Elizabeth King, *Autism treatment guide*, second edition, Future Horizons, 2000.
6. Grandin, Temple, *Thinking in pictures, and other reports from my life with autism*, Vintage Books, 1996
7. Gray, Carol, *The social story kit and sample social stories: writing effective social stories for children with autism and related disorders*, Jenison Public Schools, 1994.
8. Harris, Sandra, and Mary Jane Wiess, *Right from the start: behavioral intervention for young children with autism*, Woodbine House, 1998.

9. Harris, Sandra, *Siblings of children with autism: a guide for families*, Woodbine House, 1994.

10. Hodgdon, Linda, *Solving behavior problems in autism: improving communication with visual strategies*, QuirkRoberts Publishing, 1999.

11. Hodgdon, Linda, *Visual strategies for improving communication: practical supports for school and home*, QuirkRoberts Publishing, 1996.

12. Lovaas, Ivar, *Teaching developmentally disabled children- the "ME" book*, Pro-Ed Publishers, 1981

13. McKean, Thomas A., *Soon will come the light*, Future Education, 1994.

14. Myles, Brenda Smith, *Asperger syndrome and difficult moments: practical solutions for tantrums, rage, and meltdowns*, Autism Asperger Publishing, 1999.

15. Powers, Michael, *Children with autism: a parent's guide*, Woodbine House, 2000

16. Quill, Kathleen, *Do-watch-listen-say: social and communication intervention for children with autism*, Paul H. Brookes Publishing, 2000.

17. Quill, Kathleen, *Teaching children with autism: strategies to enhance communication and socialization*, Delmar Publishers, 1995.

18. Sacks, Oliver, *An anthropologist on Mars: seven paradoxical tales*, Alfred A. Knopf, 1995.

19. Schurr, Rosina, *Asperger's, huh?: a child's perspective*, 1999.

20. Sussman, Fern, *More than words: helping parents promote communication and social skills in children with Autism Spectrum Disorder*, The Hanen Centre, 1999.

21. Waltz, Mitzi, *Pervasive developmental disorders: finding a diagnosis and getting help*, O'Reilly and Associates, 1999.

22. *A work in progress: behavior management strategies and a curriculum for intensive behavioral treatment*, edited by Ron Leaf and John McCeachan, DRL Publishing, 1999.

23. Yack, Ellen, Shirley Sutton and Paula Aquilla, *Building Bridges through sensory integration*, Geneva Centre for Autism, 1998.